

GRASSY BEAT

vol.V, no.II #26 MAY/JUNE 1986 one\$1.dollar

inside~

★ NOISE
FEST

N.J.
HEAVY
METAL

EXPLODES

FEELIES

YO

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- SINGLE OF THE MONTH -

ALTER BOYS

ALTER BOYS
"Piles"/"Buk's Song"/"Gimme What
I Want" - One Eye Records
910 West End Ave. #15A, NYC 10025

It's not surprising that the two guitarists get top billing on the pic sleeve credits for this 45, the Alter Boys' first (and long overdue) recording. This rockin' quintet has been a personal fave of mine for a few years now. The 3-song 7-inch lays down two of their best originals and a short instrumental, the wisdom of which I will leave to others. As to the two songs with vocals, "Gimme What I Want" may be the B-side but it's my preference - a groovy Velvets chord intro and an insistently whiney vocal from singer John Carruthers. JZ Barrell and Ed Bradin double up on guitars and through some sharp production, each lends a quality sound to the proceedings - Barrell's rhythm guitar is a grungy, fuzzy, messy undercushion to Bradin's sharp, crisp, snappy leads. Play this through headphones and enjoy the ambient stereo effects - just like being there, except you can't watch John climb over chairs and stand on tables belting out the lyrics. - Jim Testa

SONEWRIter's HINTS:

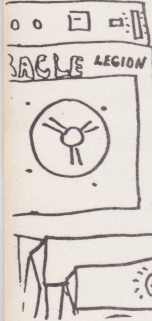
#17 - DON'T GET CARRIED

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AND IT'S my WIFE...
No, no!... it's my wife
and it's my life... yeah!
That's it! And a bit... I imagine... she's hot!

NEW YORK CITY



YOUNG TURKS
The Young Turks LP, Unstoppable
Box 519, Montclair, NJ 07042

Billy Snow and Millicent Kittay, along with a often-changing group of back musicians, have been performing and recording as the Young Turks for about four years. Now, after a string of indie 45's and several first-rate demos, they've released their first (and long overdue) album. It is something special. Billy Snow's voice is an unusual instrument, a nasal monotone that can erupt into beautiful harmonies as soon as Kittay's vibrant voice enters the mix. The songs pulsate with Snow's unique guitar style, a rhythmic strumming that seems equally influenced by the Feelies and Sterling Morrison. The songs here all sparkle with Snow's vibrant wordplay (he's a published poet as well as songwriter); if you listen carefully, there's a good deal of clever wit beneath the often psychedelic imagery. "Battle of the Day-Glo Death Chickens," for instance, metaphorically captures the manic enthusiasm of a fashion-obsessed teen spending her sizable suburban allowance on the makeup, clothes, and accessories it takes to look like a street urchin. Millicent takes centerstage on "Swan's World," a haunting Patti Smith-style rocker in which a woman berates her more-attractive mate. It's all quite gripping and unlike any other band you've heard. I recommend this.

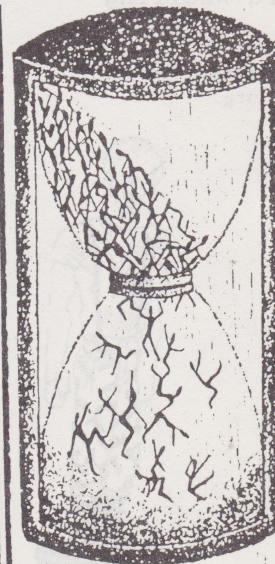
- Jim Testa



YOUNG
TURKS

KIMBOTO
Lights Over Brooklyn, EP
Unstoppable

Kimbo's lead singer, Kimbo (from Brooklyn, of course) has a pretty remarkable set of pipes. In the title tune, she goes from the gruff-voiced Chrissie Hynde kind of singing to gentle Kate Bush. The song has a danceable, commercial beat as does "Done Thing." Close your eyes and "Love Thing" could be a Lene Lovich original, with all the quirkiness and vocal yelps. "Woman Without A Dream" is pretty spectacular. Side 2 is extended disco...er, dance-mix version of "Lights Over Brooklyn" that actually grew on me over many listens. I still contend that if bands could get it right the first time, there would be no need for remixes! So how many times can you say "She's looking at the lights, the lights over Brooklyn" in 6:20? - Pattie Kleinke



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REVIEWS

RAGE TO LIVE

RAGE TO LIVE
Bar/None, Box 1704, Main Post Office
Hoboken, NJ 07030

Despite the change in name, this is still Glenn Morrow's Rage To Live, a showcase for the solo ex-Individual frontman's singing, songwriting, and guitar. Glenn's problem has always been that while he really wants to be Bruce Springsteen, he doesn't have a blue-collar bone in his body. When he starts to write a rocker, invariably the innumerable chord changes and clever lyrics and tricky production effects pile up and up. My favorite Morrow moments have always been his simplest stuff, like the Individuals' "My World" and "Leap Of Faith," or this album's "Enough Is Never Enough" and "Rain" (a song originally written for, and quickly discarded by, the Individuals a few years ago). Of the material here that's new to me, I'm most impressed by a number of narrative ballads in which Morrow's reedy voice manages to come very close to Imperial Bedroom-era Elvis Costello: "The Secret" and "Live And Breathe" both connect like Costello's later, quieter material. It's only when Morrow tries to come on like The Boss that he gets in over his head, floundering in childhood reminiscences ("The Swimmer"), striking out in the Soulful, Sensitive Lonely Guy Dept. with "Pony Day," or trying to capture working-class malaise in "Nobody Hitchhikes Anymore." When Morrow goes hitchhiking, he's got "a Winnebago with a shower stall." Bruce just woulda used his thumb. For the record, production credits are shared between Morrow, Rage To Live bassist Rich Grula, and Chris Irwin, and Morrow takes solo writing credit on only 4 out of 10 songs.

- Jim Testa

YO LA TENGO

YO LA TENGO
Ride The Tiger, LP
Coyote/TwinTone Records

This is the first LP from Hoboken's Yo La Tengo, and it's a fairly strong debut. Produced by Mission of Burma's Clint Conley, these nine originals and two covers show a wide variety of intelligent influences without being derivative. Most of the originals highlight Dave Schramm's impressive command of the guitar, and a few show an imaginative use of pedal steel as well. Ira Kaplan's vocals are usually good but buried in the mix, which may seriously hamper any chance for commercial airplay. That's a major problem, as I would love to hear songs this good crowd Night Ranger et al. off the airways. Georgia Hubley on drums and a now-departed bassist provide a solid rhythm section. Several of the songs range into cowpunk territory ("Five Years" and "The Cone of Silence") while "Evil That Men Do" starts frantically in the middle of the guitar solo from "Eight Miles High" before the song itself kicks in. Yung Wu's "Empty Pool" stands out as different from the band's usual style(s) and is a nice digression. The only clinker I heard was the Kinks' "Big Sky," which they cover without bringing anything original to the song. Kaplan strains for the high notes and doesn't make it, and the transition to the bridge is awkward. Through out the album are guitar runs which might be considered neo-psychedelic but these guys have too much imagination to be so neatly pigeonholed. They also use extensive chord changes in most songs, which is partly why their songs escape the monotony of so many other groups. Overall, this LP is a collection of well-written, well-played songs that anyone with taste and intelligence should enjoy. Ride The Tiger shows what original minds can do when they absorb a wealth of influences and then add their own ideas. The only suggestion I'd make is that next time, they go for a more substantial presence with the vocals.

- Chris Friedrich

FEELIES

THE FEELIES
The Good Earth, LP
Coyote/TwinTone Records

The Good Earth is the first full-fledged full-length Feelies album since their debut, Crazy Rhythms, released some six years ago. Produced by REM guitarist Peter Buck, The Good Earth updates the patented Feelies pop-revisionist power-drone as well as striking out in several new directions. For one, "Slipping (Into Something)" is the most seamless and pertinent homage to the Velvet Underground in recent memory. Starting out all slinky and low-key, like "Some Kinda Love" from The Velvet Underground, it shifts into frantic "European Son" overdrive slashed thru with impeccable "Ostrich" guitarrring courtesy of Feelies co-founder Glenn Mercer. Elsewhere, there's the playful pop-pastiche, "Tomorrow Today," the legacy of their Types and Yung Wu R&D side-projects. And a heaping helping of gritty guitar pop material: "On The Roof," "Two Rooms," "Let's Go," and others. Fans of the group's earlier effort will undoubtedly take pleasure in numbers like "The Last Roundup," with its monochromatically set rhythm guitars, Frippy leads, and stunning gatling-gun percussive movement. "When Company Comes," a staple of their instrumental 'Willies' performances, folds lush acoustic guitars over a whirling electric center to create a techno-folk hybrid that is nothing short of stunning. All in all, The Good Earth is a healthy re-introduction to one of the most original and powerful bands America has ever produced.

- Howard Wuelfing, Jr.



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MOD FUN



The Stealees are one of those bands that include ads for their "headline" gigs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at CBGB and The Dive in their presskit. Well, okay, they're not going to impress anyone with their show biz savvy (or their looks - the presskit photo looks like an outtake from The Bowery Boys Go Girl Crazy!). So naturally the tape rips, right? Okay, I'm a sucker for big punk-rock guitars, and Larry Bassani (age: 27; favorite food, Frosted Flakes - what a presskit!!) has a sharp rhythm/lead style perfect for trio play. Chris Scotti on bass and Quito Ecuador on drums provide a tight, bouncy bottom for the catchy light-spirited tunes. This stuff reminds me a lot of Chris Moffa & The Competition, one of my fave combos from a few years back, and I bet they're lots of fun live when they metal out to "One Of Us Born Every Minute," sort of a We Are The World type anthem for assholes. Ahh, my kind of people at last.

STEWART BRODIAN has been a low-key behind-the-scenes figure on the NJ scene for a while, running a small label (Mountain Records) and promoting his own music as well as others'. This tape is actually the demo for a forthcoming 45. The A-side is a techno-dance tune with a nice beat and an offbeat melody that lingers. "Roxy" is a lush keyboard-filled ballad very much in style of latter John Lennon. Sounds like a winner for latenight college radio. Watch for the single. And I'm outta here...

Mod Fun seems to have a split personality. They dwell too much on their authenticity on vinyl, sounding too much/not enough like their influences. They haven't captured enough of their burning live spirit on record yet. I have no doubt they will; they certainly can be amazing live. They often burn through their sets with a ferocity uncommon to most garage units. Their last Maxwells gig in December totally blew me away! Watch out for upcoming gigs. Let us not forget Mick's exquisite playing with the Love Pushers, both live and in the studio. Some advice: Take more chances & expand your sound. Do not limit yourselves & your time will come.

by Howard Wuelfing, Jr.

It's not the kind of work I do with zest, but anything goes for old pals. So's I got me some nice straight pine boards, a 1/4 lb. o' threepenny nails, and built me a brace of stury li'l pigeon-holes. Then I set about filling 'em...

Angry Red Planet, Dinosaur, and The Distraction Boys have all made the sort of singles that keep me coming back to the Amerockan post-hardcore scene whenever my brain needs a guided jolt of high energy. They've delivered audacious, articulare records that tilt at targeted aesthetic restrictions whilst expressing rambunctious spirits and trying to initiate potential fellow travelers. A.R.P.'s GAWKERS PARADISE EP (Touch & Go) tastes popsy like the Embarrassment and artsy like the Minutemen, depending on where you bite down. Dinosaur's "REPULSION" (Homestead) does for America (the group) what the Meat Puppets did for Neil Young (the born-again crypto-fascist). The Distraction Boys generate a pulsing fractious thrash in a pre-punk anti-rock style ala' The Motor City Five's legendary "Back to Comm" on "PAY OFF THE COPS" (Cryptovision) that tickles me in the same spot as Leather Nun at their finest.

Salem 66, Mystery Date, and Ivan X, meanwhile, point up the less galvanizing side of indie singles. Their records are all together too polite, self-consciously artsy (not extreme enough to be called "arty," fer chrissakes!), and more than a smide Anglophilic. Delta 5 died for Salem 66's sins and yet the latter still have the nerve to issue tissue-thin fare like "LOVE AND TRUTH" (Homestead). Oh, the shame! "ZOOM" (Twilight) by Mystery Date is able indie Anglo pop from femme Atlanteans that doesn't invite replay whatsoever, so utterly predictable and tropistic 'tis. Despite the writing and guitar exhortations of Swans' Norman Westberg and vocals, percussing, and writing from Ivan "X" Nayhem, who appeared on the latest Swans' waxing, "TELL TALE HEART" (Ring of Fire) and its kith are timid, rigid, vapid art-rock workouts. No tunes, no outrage, no fun mah baby.

The Young Idea, Alexander & The Big Reach, Invisible Party, and the Nicky Bliss Band have all tried cornering the Spirit of Goodtime R'n'R at some sleazy bar at Happy Hour to scrounge pointers. All, save Invisible Party, were suckered by the olde grouch into adopting received revivalist strategems - yecch! "A Hundred" is effortless smart-pop from Invisible Party much resembling Petey Holsapple's long-gone wont. It it were less demo-ish it'd be a gem. "Stop & Think" (Jargon), "Reach" (Triplezone) and "Janine" (Hitman) respectively are too lame for words. Thus:

Art Interface, The Dispossessed, and Bunji Jumpers are all aboriginal synthesizer stylists and in their primitiveness of passing interest. "Wardance" (If) is dated bedroom-demo quality kookiness from a guy who used to write my old fanzine complainin' about the likes of Tesco Vee. So, who's-sorry-now? The Dispossessed lay out a simple tune plainly but assertively on "Desire" (Low Spark). I like it. Bunji Jumpers want to be a perky commercial synth-pop band if "Brilliance" (Banana) is any indication, they will - in about 5 more years. I won't be holdin' my breath.

DISCORDS

by HOWARD WUELFING

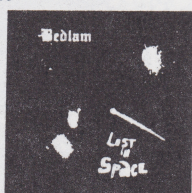
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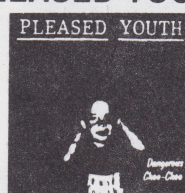
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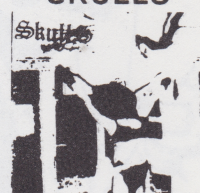


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SECOND ANNUAL JERSEY NOISE
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WOW!

THIS ISSUE'S COVER
WAS DESIGNED BY
MICHAEL BELLAN.
NOISE FEST COLLAGES
BY MICHAEL BELLAN &
BRUCE GALLANTER.

by BRUCE LEE GALLANTER

The Second Annual N.J. Noise Festival
April 11 & 12, Mod Art Studios, Rahway, NJ

This was my 5th festival in the last year and a half, and I am still amazed by what (mostly) NJ bands have to offer the world. No one unit has played any of these festivals twice. This was my third 2-day, 12-band fest, but more important, this was the SECOND ANNUAL NJ Noise Fest. Could this year's be yet another (infamous) molecule-smashing odyssey like last year's? It was and more. Attendance has been fine for the last 3 fests, but I feel musically and spiritually that this was the most successful of all.

This year's fest began with a ritual intro poem explaining, "We all endlessly seek a connection to some strong force (be it humor or even an art/music connect)!" Each unit did something strong enough to hook into. All bands took chances, often questioning exactly what is music. Much of it seemed closer to real life than much of what is found in most clubs today. There were constant surprises. Thanks to everyone who participated - you really done me proud.

DAY ONE

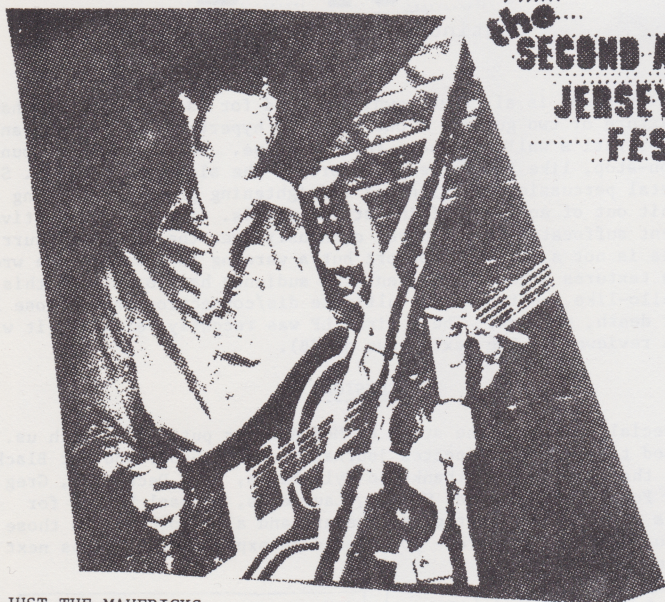
THE IMAGINARY UNIT

When last seen/heard at the Psychedelic Fest just 2 months ago, Suburban Bohemia had swelled to six members - occasionally out of my control and confused-sounding, yet often coming together in odd places. I had thought of splitting the band in half into two trios, but due to various factors no one really had a chance to rehearse. Inspired, nonetheless, with half a dozen new poems (as well as a ridiculously serious newspaper article about these fests and my hubcap playing), I decided to go for it anyway, in the true spirit of improv. Hence, I opened this fest accompanied by the newly reunited Dissipated Face, as well as various long-standing members of Sub.Bohemia - young, but always searching for new sounds/genres to dig into.

For the first time in many years, I had written a few poems touching on the various manifestations of love, trying to avoid the usual cliches. In the first, "It Is You," the wonderful but apprehensive trance-like state that love can provide is apparent. For once, the 'Face cats were extremely subtle, furnishing a soft hushed grip, an almost Dead-like floating suspension of purity. "The Spirit Never Rests" began with a goofy hubcap groove, which was transmitted thru the room by various drummers in attendance. I treasure these pure spontaneous moments. It evolved into a distorto funk section, with Kurt H. inserting his wounded animal feedback splatters. As I screamed, "I just want all the fucking pain to stop!", it ended in an explosion of noise.

DOS EQUIS

Once again due to illness, another unit - ATATBATA, 4-piece percussion wizards from New Brunswick - had to perform as a duo featuring Richard "Bear" Graham (of Young Turks, Lunar/Bear, etc.) and cohort Mike Mironov. It was an enchanting journey thru the world of percussion and int'l folk tunes/chants, the subtlest and most acoustic set of the fest, featuring an ever-evolving series of duets: Egyptian and Brazilian drums, berimbau and kalimba, and Jew's harp/conga. Like a soundtrack from a National Geographic travelogue, documenting native musics. Bear narrated the proceedings, introducing the varied folk tunes and mysterious instruments. There was a joyous, innocent beauty that even children could appreciate. A well-received and well-needed change of vibration.



JOHN RICHEY'S THRUNK-SHUN

Richey, formerly of the Young Turks and leader of Lunar/Bear, pulled it off again. A lg. New Brunswick All-Star ensemble, & what a cast! The 3 blastin' guitars were Doug Snyder on lead (whoa!) with the blistering rhythm gtrs. of Tina Maschi (Frozen Concentrate) and Doug V. (Pleased Youth). An amazing funk/fusion rhythm team of Jair-Rohn Parker Wells (bass), Smokin' Bill Bryant (drums), and Bear, a holdover from the last set who proved himself an ever-resourceful percussionist. Altho fairly diverse, with their walking jazz-like bass-lined episodes and spacey avant-free but ever-meaningful excursions, most of this set was deliriously rockin'! A non-stop hot pumping rhythm section propelled the wailing Claptonish lead & rhythm guitar fury, inspiring John Richey to go even further than usual. Richey concluded with his despondent epic poem on industrial pollution and its grip on the New Brunswick area, "Alien Nation." It's a sad/scary dirge that got more noisy as it evolved, with some growling, monstrous groans from the guitars. This was Thrunk-shun's first, but hopefully not last, gig.

JUST THE MAVERICKS

Since the spirit and lyrics of most Hardcore is usually of serious intent, members of many of Jersey's best HC units often put together rather silly offshoot groups, just to make fun of these formulas. Just The Mavericks were Noise Fest Day One's confrontation with silliness. Members were plucked from Pleased Youth, Bodies In Panic, and PED, and constantly switched off instruments. Interestingly, they had NO lead guitar, but let the bass and vocals fulfill this function. Also included was a cheeseey Casio keyboard and one member who broke beer bottles in an amplified garbage can. The glass-smashing did add an element of fear, as fragments flew out into the audience. Nothing like living on the edge. Their set consisted of fake TV theme instrumentals and a mutated version of that chestnut, "Search & Destroy," sung by local sex symbol Keith Hartel. Mos effective moments occurred with the crooning talents of Kyle Eaves (BIP) and Keith (PY), while the band went in a completely opposite direction, with lovely screams of pain in the background of these love tunes.

DISSIPATED FACE

It looks as if their time has finally come. Longtime close friends of mine, now resident of NYC, this band blew minds as a prog.-rock teen trio at CBGB almost 5 years ago. The Face has been in limbo as each member pursued outside projects. They have incredibly diverse influences - punk/funk/psychedelic/metal/noise can be found in their brew. Even if the technical prowess of the switching-off rhythm team is not amazing, and the vocals occasionally torturous (to good effect), they have learned how to take their talents to the limits. Their small scientific guitar whiz, Kurt Ralske Hologram, was formally in a cool Alphabet City unit called King of Culture, and is currently in two bands each with singles out - Crash and Nothing But Happiness. Kurt has become one of the finest, most selective & scary master of suspense guitar demons - he has harnessed feedback, making it work for him. It is so rare to hear any local units doing music resembling the thick dark fury of King Crimson, yet this seems to be a main influence on the Face. Many of their songs have a uniquely altered formula of slow/fast/slow/fast, continually pulling the audience from one density/texture to another. A CBGB gig is in the offing - do not miss them!!

Continued on next page

CATHARSIS

Where do all these great new bands come from? I do recognize a member or two from last year's lineup of HC madmen Bodies In Panic. But this is something quite different, up there with the double-wailing guitar storms of bands like Gun Club or Dream Syndicate. Still, Catharsis has its own shimmering punk/blues distinction. And boy, did they burn thru a smoking set. A number of triumphant instrumentals added some cool mystery to their sound. As menacing as the imposing gtr. & distorted bass could get, there was always a deep sense of melody ringing at their center. One number was like a dripping-with-emotion Neil Young-ish rocker, a real gem. They encored with that appropriate Stooges' anthem, "I Wanna Be Your Dog."

DAY # 2

THE IMAGINARY DUO

The most electronically-altered of all this fest's units, it featured Rock N. Rollo on echoplex vox, recorder, and hubcaps, and Jim Russo on his distinguished elec.gtr. and rack-mounted sequence delay. A lovely melancholy haze pervailed at the out-set, due to poem substance and uncertain guitar atmospheric. Due to varied echo devices, the sequence and overall sound seemed to alter itself, making this piece like a journey.

ASBESTOS

No one knew what to make of these 4 lunatics, altho I thought they were loads of fun. The 3 men dressed in blood-spattered butcher smocks, with Wild Wendy in blue hair and different-colored gloves beating on hung metals! They also used a TV set on its side with its bouncing images adding to the mess. They littered the stage with newspapers (shades of Psychodrama!) and did a great job of falling into one another. They had a rather popular sloppy/sludge/warped/hard-rock edge, always on the brink of disintegrating. To me, they had a constant joyous melody buried in the confusion. Utilizing ugly, sluggish drones, but never burying us in volume, they seemed almost tribal.

RITUAL TENSION

As is commonplace with these festivals, Ritual Tension from the Lower East Side did not have their drummer with them. Still, they ripped thru one of the more distinctive sets as just a trio - Marc Sloan on bass, an elec.gtr., and an odd-looking older skinhead in a cowboy hat as lead vocalist. They were tight, with well-rehearsed gloomy dirges, almost Beefheartian in their unexpected twists and changes of texture. The music was very suspenseful and mysterious, a combination of controlled dentist-drill guitar with ~~WHXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ well-chosen bass-scapes and hip anguished vocal extremes. They have an LP coming out soon and some NYC gigs.

CLEFT PALATE

I still don't believe that this duo (plus tapes) made all that overwhelming noise/music. Just two extremists going overboard. Consisting of Boy White's totally twisted screaming vocals and appropriate violent stage antics, with Billy Tucker's stunning immense wall-of-sound guitar and theatrics. Obnoxious...or just too real for comfort? Billy's demented backing tapes provided much of the dart thematic metal funk bravura, pounding on our skulls. The environment was further altered by alien sound effects, which were triggered by the rhythms. It was visually stimulating as well, with both dudes' nonstop facial and body contortions, beer-spitting tactics, and ritual burial (in the stage) of an old warped guitar. Both of these crazies are also members of NJ legends The Scornflakes, whose first LP is now out on Bird O Pray Records. Cleft Palate has a tape on the same label. Check 'em out if you're brave enough.

PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH

It was not that long ago that a band such as Regressive Aid was unique in its approach with high-speed velocity and intensity, and dazzling instrumental chops most often found in the better jazz/fusion units. We now have a number of young bands of similar distinction - Gutbank, Soul Asylum, or Phantom Tollbooth, daredevil guitar trio from L.I. Lead gtr. Dave Rick is phenomenal as a Frith-on-speed, pulling off incredibly quick, totally fractured yet controlled, insect-like solos. Each explosion is matched and propelled by an amazingly tight, high-flying rhythm section. Their bassist was no less daunting, consistently providing a massive, evolving storm of sounds on bass. Watch out!! Their set went by in a blur, completely condensed happenings, each square of sound totally filled. When they finally slowed down, doing a cover no less, they did a ripping punk/blues basher with a mind-frying psychpunk guitar solo. A single on Homestead is due soon and they should be at Maxwells at the end of May.

WILL TO LIVE

This was the perfect ending for this noise fest. The Ultimate eerie experience, bathed in darkness, the only light flickering from their home movie of decaying corpses, metal sparks flying into the audience from their metal-grinder percussionist. Will To Live go all the way, totally exhausting the few remaining survivors at 3 a.m. Tension/frustration/hatred of routine with and odd sort of violent beauty. A living nightmare which can't be avoided. A twisted seduction, an overwhelming ritualistic mass. Is this the will to live??

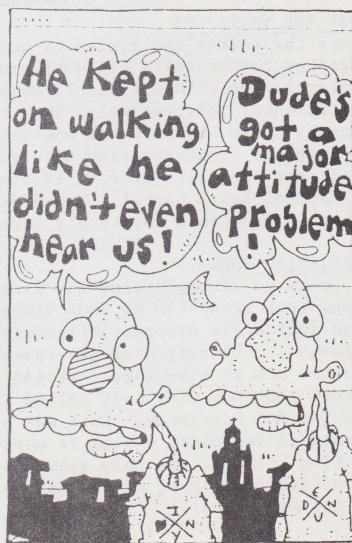
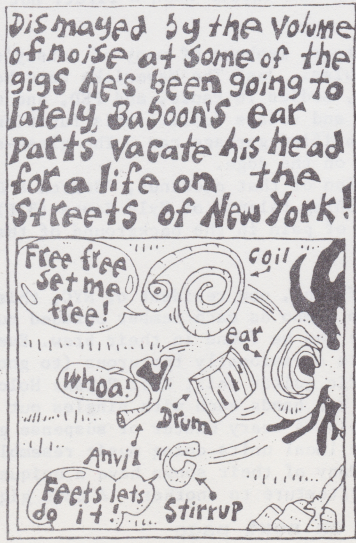
NOISE

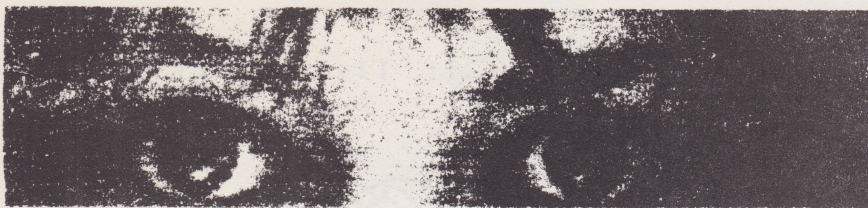
Continued from last page

Their sound is all their own, and good for us. A swirling phased mixture of two guitars - one bleeding hypertense rock lead, and Amor Fati's wall of sludge rhythm plague. The rhythm men pound non-stop, like the forces that propel the slaves of routine. Scrap metal percussionist Brian has a frightening presence, beating the shit out of an array of industrial metals. Amori's distinctive bent suffocated vocals hover ominously over the distorted hurricane. His is not a voice of comfort but a warning to a world gone wrong. As textures began to thicken, the audience had to swim in this jello-like substance. The ultimate dis/connection and a close look at death, perhaps. Their first LP was recently released (it will be reviewed in the next issue of JB).

CONCLUSION

Special thanks to the staff of Mod Art for putting up with us. Good to see well-respected journalists Paul Bubny and Art Black at the event. Also thanks to Kyle Eaves, Paul Decalator, Greg of Futile Effort, Greg Walker, Laurie Es, Michael Bellan for his expertise and that great poster, and all who came. To those of you who weren't there - you missed an experience. Perhaps next time.





SAMHAIN

November-Coming-Fire, LP
Plan 9/Caroline

Samhain has finally arrived. 1984's Initium, tho great, was still basically a continuation of the Misfits' horrorpunk sound. Last year's Unholy Passion LP, a step in a more gothic & metal-influenced direction, suffered badly from poor production.

November-Coming-Fire, clumsy title notwithstanding, is the final step: A culmination of what Samhain is or should be. It's a crisply exciting blackness of sound that rips through your nervous system like Freddy Krueger's claws, yet possesses a Bauhaus-like sense of scary atmospherics that'll raise the hairs on the back of your neck. Glenn's amazing voice is back upfront where it belongs, while underrated guitarist Damien unleashes a deadly barrage of piercing harmonics, eerie fills, and thunderous powerchords. Danzig's songwriting is really back at full strength & there's a goldmine of creepy classics here for the devotee to savor, like the furious metallic "Mother Of Mercy," roaring "Kiss Of Steel," a raunchy remake of the 'Fits' "Halloween 2," and the ballad, "To Walk The Night," a dark, haunting paean to those who live in darkness. The album's masterpiece is "Let The Day Begin," an explosive pagan cry of exultation at the coming Armageddon.

Surrender to the dark gift Samhain offers, and as the words say, "Let the horror start..."

- Greg Fasolino



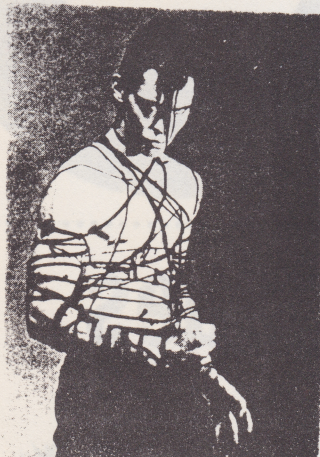
FALSE PROPHETS

Alternative Tentacles, LP

I can't remember a NY hardcore scene without the False Prophets. They've been around in one form or another since at least 1980, and only now have released their first LP (recorded in 1984). Never has such patience and endurance reaped such rich rewards.

This is the best punk LP to come out of the NY scene since Kraut's Adjustment To Society. It captures both the burning smarts (melodies, harmonies, musicianship) of the best punk-rock and the angry, thrashing speed/energy of hardcore. Old songs - some of them released as singles before most of today's h-c bands were formed - retain their urgency and impact, while newer material shows a broadening of influences (esp. in Debra Adele's gothic keyboards) and an unwavering commitment to the band's ideals. Plus the LP comes with a fanzine-size book of lyrics and band bios. Keeping a punk band together for six years in New York is an achievement; releasing an album this good after all that time is a miracle.

- Jim Testa



PUNK

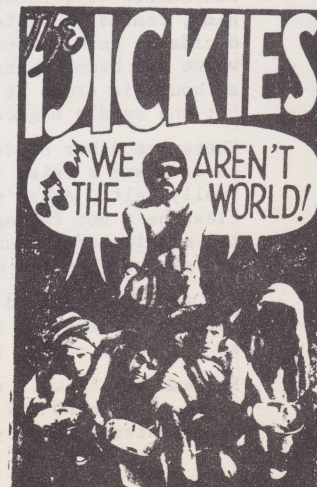
DICKIES

We Aren't The World, cassette

ROIR, 611 Broadway #725, New York NY 10012

The Dickies earned their paragraph in Rock History by playing a lot of dumb songs that everybody already knew - "Paranoid," "Nights In White Satin," "Eve of Destruction," "Banana Splits Theme" - louder 'n faster than they were supposed to be played. Some folks got the joke and thought it was funny; but some misguided youths figured it was supposed to sound like that - and Hardcore was born. This cassette tells the whole sordid story, starting with 4-track demos from 1977 right up through a Summer, '85 show at CBGB. Dickies fans should be thrilled that so many of these songs are finally available again, given the collector's market that's developed with the band's early singles. But anyone new to the group may listen to all this nonsense - including singer Len Phillips' unremittingly banal stage patter - and wonder what all the fuss has been about.

- Jim Testa



by Dawn Eden

If I asked you to name some of the top NJ garage bands you might reply with names like Mod Fun or the Creeping Pumpkins. Sure, but aren't you forgetting bands like Saturday's Garbage, the Young Monkeymen, and the Friedles? NJ has a garage-rock heritage it can be proud of - a long list of forgotten 60's groups like those above - and, thankfully, one man dedicated to preserving that heritage and bringing it into the '80's. His name is Bob Cianci, the rabid Jerseyphile and record collector who released 1984's **ATTACK OF THE JERSEY TEENS** and who will soon be releasing the sequel, **REVENGE OF THE JERSEY TEENS**.

BOB CIANCI: The Man Behind

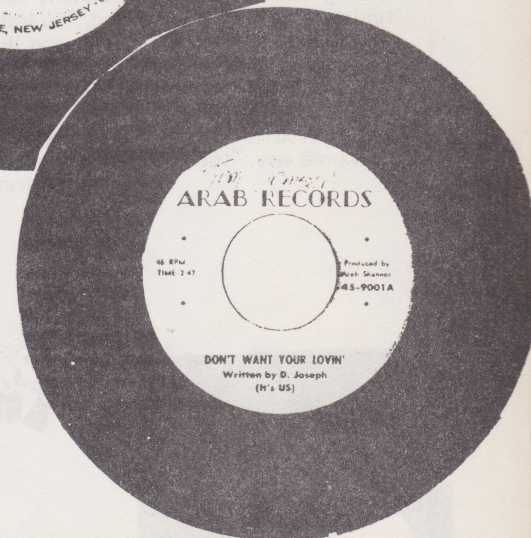
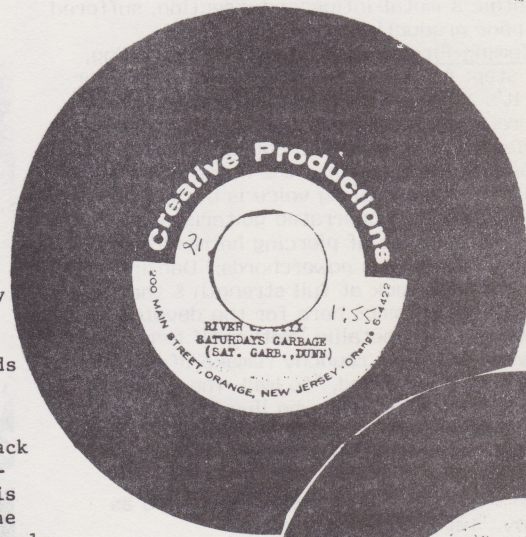


I caught up with Cianci at Betty's Fireside Inn in Denville, where he was about to go onstage with his new band, the Rockin' Roosters. Incidentally, the Roosters are a '50's & '60's cover band not to be missed, whose lineup also includes ex-Remains bassist Vern Miller. But that's not what Cianci was there to talk about. Instead, he led me through a time warp, showing what the NJ teen punk scene was like 20 years ago.

"Up until we put out Attack of the Jersey Teens," said Cianci, "collectors used to just slough New Jersey off and say, 'There was nothing happening in New Jersey. It was all just Young Rascals clones.' That's not true. There were, yes, lots of white, commercial soul bands. However, there were quite a few Byrdsy folk-punk bands. There were blues bands in '67 and '68. I wouldn't say there was a surf scene, but there was definitely an instrumental Ventures-oriented scene. The first band I played in was like that. We were called The Iridescent, and we did 'Pipeline' and 'Wipeout'...There were all different kinds of bands during that whole golden era - 1965, '66, '67."

The idea for Attack of the Jersey Teens came after Cianci contacted Rick Noll of BonaFide Records. He saw a notice on the back of BonaFide's Return of the Young Pennsylvanians soliciting ex-members of local '60's punk bands, so he sent Noll a tape of his own band, Saturday's Garbage. Noll liked the recording, and the two decided to compile a Jersey Teens LP. Cianci: "I dug a couple of things up and he dug a couple of things up, and pretty soon we had enough to do an album. From when we originally got the idea, it probably took us about 8 or 9 months to put it out. The album was finally released in November, '84. We pressed up a thousand copies and they went right away, and we had another thousand pressed and have sold almost all of those."

Not one to rest on his laurels, Cianci started working on Vol. II. "We had a couple of things left over from Volume I that we didn't use for different reasons," he said. "There's one record we have by a group called the Kynd, from the Flanders area of Morris County, and we weren't sure if they were a Jersey band or not. We were able to confirm that they were from the guy who put that out, so we're using that on Volume II."



FAHRENHEIT 451: Gothic blues

by Dawn Eden

Fahrenheit 451, rather than reminding me of the Ray Bradbury novel from which they took their name, remind me instead of another classic: Dracula. Lead singer Athan Maroulis' image is decidedly gothic; from his pallid countenance to his tall, thin figure clothed in black, to his voice - a haunting baritone wail. The band's music is what some might call "neo-psychedelia," although in truth it owes more to the '80's than the '60's. Some of 451's songs sound Doors-y, but the band's biggest influence is British gloom-rock bands like Joy Division.

There are other bands with a similar sound to F451 that falter because they try to give their music a false sense of depth, writing songs about deep, dark feelings that they've never really felt. Athan's exceptional ability to communicate visually with his audience makes it clear he's not faking it. His moves and facial expressions are extremely intense, adding to the meaning of his songs. The result is not only an effectively realistic air of gloom and depression; his few moments of joy are believable as well.

The rest of the band - three of whom were in Quakes At Lima, one of NJ's first synth-pop bands - have the ability to play well but lack creativity. They often play a hook to death, ruining an otherwise catchy riff through repetition.

Fahrenheit 451 will release an EP in June, and anyone interested in contacting the band can write them at PO Box 133, Montclair, NJ 07042. If the band can make their music just a little more listenable, they'll be among the most visible and impressive bands on the scene.



THE "LORDS"

AT MORRISTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, October 14, — 8:30 P.M.

Also Appearing: THE VANDLES & THE LEGENDS



Other bands Cianci has discovered that will probably be on Vol. II include the Wild Things, the Thorns, the Dimensions, the People, the Night Watch, and It's Us. "We have found so much stuff," he said. "I just uncovered a whole album from 1967. It's a privately pressed record called It's Happening Here. All Jersey bands. About a half-dozen of them are good punkers. I don't think we'll use all six of them on Vol. II, but we will use, I'm sure, two or three or four of them and then save the rest for Vol. III."

"We found another record that we're most likely going to use on Vol. II, a band called Homesick Blues, Ltd. from Union City. They put out a record on Mod Records, the old Bo Diddley tune, 'Mona,' basically the way the Stones did it, but better."

Some people may be surprised to learn that so much of the '60's scene came out of the suburbs; but, according to Cianci, "If you look around the country during the whole punk thing of the '60's, suburbia probably gave us the best bands. It goes back to a sociological situation that I've done some checking into and been a part of myself. Suburban kids very often feel like they have to bust out. You're stuck in a sterile environment where all the houses look the same and you gotta let loose... Getting more into the sociological aspect of it, I think after the Beatles came along, being in a band provided identity for a lot of guys who otherwise didn't have any identity because they weren't handsome and they weren't jocks, so if you could play an instrument you could be a little different from everybody else. One of the main reasons, I'm sure, that I wanted to play drums was so I could do something, because I was just a nerd in school. I didn't look like I had any talent, I wasn't a jock, and I wasn't in the in-crowd, so I said, 'Maybe if I play drums, it'll give me a little bit of an edge.'"

Cianci remembers that the garage sound of Saturday's Garbage usually received a less-than-enthusiastic response. "We were all from Bloomfield, but often we'd play in Belleville, which was a real greaser town, and we'd get these guys who just wanted to kick our butts because we didn't do Temptations and soul music."

Although the terms "punk" and "garage" are used universally today to describe bands like Saturday's Garbage, Cianci claimed that they weren't used in the '60's. "The term 'punk rock' didn't come into being until whenever Lenny Kaye put out Nuggets [1972 - ed.]," he said. "He's the guy that really invented that term. We didn't call it punk, we didn't call it garage-rock. It was just rock."

With so much attention being focused on '60's underground bands, I asked Cianci if those groups were more popular now than they were then. "Absolutely," he replied. "Just look at Saturday's Garbage. When we recorded 'The River of Styx' in 1967, there were only seven copies pressed up of the acetate. That's all there were, and there aren't even seven copies left - maybe four or five, and that's it. It's been on two compilations (Attack of the Jersey Teens and Mindrockers, Vol. 8). Thousands of people have heard it now, whereas we only had seven copies back in the '60's."

For all the work he puts into compiling the Jersey Teens albums, Cianci makes little profit from them. But, as he observed, "You don't get into this business of doing these compilations if you want to make a lot of money, because you don't. You do it for the love of it. There's no real money you make, but just the satisfaction of getting the stuff out there to the people who want to hear it is what makes it all worthwhile to us."

T H E N E W A L B U M



ALL RISE

NAKED RAYGUN



*Homestead
Records*

METAL UNDERGROUND



DEATHRASH

c/o P. Burns, RR#2, Box 1039, Highland Lks, NJ 07422

SPEEDCORE: Slam! BAM! BAM! Rumble rumble. BAM! BAM! BAM! Stuff this fast & heavy has to all sound alike - all the melody, emotion, and finesse is compressed into one supercharged wallop. To their credit, Deathrash do pack a BANG! Drummer Tony Scaglione and bassist Pat Burns leave a blazing trail of crushed eardrums and fused synapses in their wake as they career through these hyperdrive rockers. Vocalist John Scherer has a gritty hardcore presence that translates well onto acetate; lots of muscle in those tonsils. This combo could easily crossover into the h-c speedmetal ranks, esp. on the strength of well-crafted originals like "Buried Alive," with its great tricky stop/start chorus. "Blood For Blood" has a ringing anthem Oi chant to it that'd probably send the CBGB pit into a cataclysmic frenzy. Deathrash! Calamine lotion won't stop these dudes!

MATRIARCH

c/o A. Gordon, 75 W. 18 St., Bayonne NJ 07002

It figgers - one of the better tapes coming out of this heavy metal circus comes from the combo with the least progessional savvy. No presskit, no pix, just a plain C-60 demo with so much hiss on the trax it sounds like it was recorded in the shower (with the water running). But, like, who cares? Musically, they got it. "We are influenced by Iron Maiden, Priest, Accept, Crue, Ratt, and Dokken," writes guitarist Art 'Flash' Gordon. Their tape has some power-rockin' tunes - good melodies, hot licks, not too much grandstanding solos, and the screeching falsetto vocals (by frontman Tony Russo) are kept to a minimum. Nicky Spina and Tony Prosapio (on gtr. and bass, resp.) play racketball with the bottom with throbbin' lead lines while John 'Conan' Cona wallops the tar outta the backbeat on drums. Only on the band's token attempt at speedcore do they stumble a bit. Otherwise, yeah, they rock. And they can write songs, people. Check 'em out.

PRISONER

c/o Carl Turso, 516 8 St., Palisades Pk, NJ 07650

Fans of Ratt and Crue, dig Prisoner: Not only do they have the same haircuts and raggedy shirts, but they play the same catchy, punchy hard-rockin' raunch 'n roll. "Rock You Through The Night" holds its own against any commercial metal I've heard lately - lots of swell backup vocals fill out the sound. Lead singer/gtrst. Jimmy Santasiero and lead gtr. Carl Turso work well as a team, the stinging lead axework picking up where Santasiero's crunchy vocals leave off. Cool stuff. But buy some new shirts, guys.

METAL



PRISONER

by 'METAL' MIKE FERRIS

BLOODLUST

U68 POWER HOUR
Channel 68 UHF
Mon.-Fri. 11 - Mid.

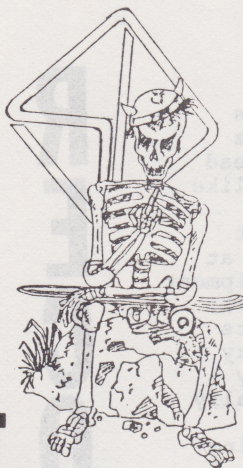
I can't believe how many people whine about MTV but still ignore this free video channel. Besides running local-band videos that MTV won't touch (Cucumbers, Mosquitos, Del Lords, etc.), they also run an hour of heavy-metal videos every night from 11 pm to midnight. Everything from Motorhead to Venom, from local club bands to big superstars. All you need is a UHF antenna and you should be able to pick up the channel anywhere in the Greater NY area. Check it out!!

KRAZY ALICE

Krazy Alice hails from Lindenhurst (LI) and wears makeup. "Our style is what some people call 'Glam Rock,'" according to guitarist Jamie Lynn. "We call it Circus Rock because of the outrageous stage clothes and makeup. The band's currently in the middle of redesigning its look and breaking in a new bassist; meanwhile, original members Kris Fury (vocals) and Bobby Dee (drums) have a 3-song demo out that reminds me of early Alice Cooper. I like early Alice Cooper. A lot. This Alice's vocals are strong, not screechy, and the songs have a bold, hard sound full of power riffs and steady, pounding percussion. MTV, are you ready for "Lipstick Love?" The band's promised to send photos as soon as the new costumes are ready. I can't wait.
Krazy Alice c/o J. Lynn, 820 N. Indiana Ave. Lindenhurst, NY.

BLOODLUST
15 Elna Ct., Bayonne NJ 07002

Bayonne's Bloodlust does almost nothing wrong on their 4-song demo and still manage to get almost nothing right. Singer Gary Markovitch certainly has that shriek of satanic hysteria down to a T and guitarist Adam Tranquilli rips some screaming leads out of his frets, while the rhythm section of drummer Lou Starita and bassist Kevin Kuzma create a non-stop rumbling that must measure 5.6 on the Richter Scale. But it all adds up to less than a sum of its parts - generic soundalike death-metal without a riff or distinguishable lyric to set one song apart from another. These guys might lust for blood - I'd settle for one original hook.



NOT FOR POSERS
c/o Eric McDermott
155 Reservoir Ave.
Boonton, NJ 07005 \$1.50

Very well-done heavy-metal zine with original drawings in lieu of photos. Most of the writing is of the "This band friggin' rools" school but lots of info on the BIG (but largely ignored) underground metal scene. Recommended for headbangers.

AMERICAN STEEL

March Reign. Power trio. Strum und drang. David Bovenschulte, guitar hero. Ed Owen, snare drums extraordinaire. Tod Vasquez, bass & vocals. Coerced into frontman role after band auditions "40-50 singers" and can't find one that fits. Vasquez' voice fits like an iron glove. Hear the music and imagine the leather & studs. Give them a budget and the lasers and smoke effects will follow. Logo reads "American Steel." I hear lots of Triumph.
"Fist Full of Thunder:"
"We hit the streets
like a fist full of thunder
A shotgun screams in the night."
Ozzy rules.
So be it.

March Reign demo, \$2.75
226 Taylor St., S.I., NY 10310



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
A Few, LP
Gark, 5321 France Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55410

You'd swear this quartet was from Athens or Winston-Salem if you didn't look at the label and see Minneapolis. God, first Husker Du and the Replacements, and now they're turning out great R.E.M.-ish pop bands. Lyrics that bristle with wit and memorable imagery, songs with melodies that stick in your head days after you've heard them, a mix that perfectly blends acoustic guitars and pianos with a subtle bass, crisp and simple drumming, and a great voice. If the R.E.M. comparisons don't sink 'em, A Few is going to be turning more than a few heads and ears when they tour behind this album. If you've been waiting for a record comparable to Chronic Town, buy this. Now.

- Jim Testa

BEASTIE BOYS
"She's On It"/"Slow And Low", 12" EP
Def Jam/CBS

Despite the major label funding, this is authentically groovesome. '76 style spizz guitar and stumpy bass keep one step ahead of a monolithic drumbox thumping not unlike what possibly sounded in Bonzo Bonham's head after the 4th Black Russian on that fateful, fatal day (putting his playing at the service of anyone with sampling equipment and a shoplifted Zep record or two - Ha!). I like the flip even better tho, with its reptilean gait and radical (to mine hanky ears at least) dubbery. Love that merry dinglin' bell too. Much like a politically unhappier version of Big Stick.

- Howard Wuelfing

STRUNG OUT ON JARGON
Death of Samantha, LP
Homestead

This Ohio band has exactly the same idea as quite a few local combos into that droning, post-Velvets sound: No riffs, no hooks, just a grinding rhythm guitar buzz overlaid with a throbbing, melodic bassline and a fidgety lead guitar. Add a singer who can't quite carry a tune and you could be describing Great Wall or Curving Dog or Desk Set or anyone of a number of other local acts. Maybe I dig Death Of Samantha more than those other bands because they sing about real things, like going to hell or breakfast, not the pop-art abstract/expressionist lyrics so favored by our local drone bands. Or maybe it's singer John Petkovic's voice; on "Bed of Fire," my favorite cut, he manages to sound just like Jim Morrison imitating Lou Reed. Says here, "Recorded live...in 6 hours." Ah, Homestead, home of the hits.

- Jim Testa

Monkey Rhythm-This Must Be The Place EP (415 Records, P.O. Box 14563, S.F., CA 94114). Once you ignore the pretentious lyrics this is a pretty good debut record by a trio of extremely talented 19-year-olds from S.F. Anything on here would fit right in on WRSU or WHIG. Most are rockin' pop songs, with occasional excursions into funk. The singer reminded me of Vox Bono, and the band has some pretty complex polyrhythmic arrangements for the basic guitar/bass/drums trio. "Happiness Died At The Willow Tree" sounds different from the rest, and is a soaring pop song that would do REM proud. If these guys start writing decent lyrics they could be great. Definitely worth following.

--Chris Friedrich

Evan Bradford-A Flash Of Color EP (Left Lane Records, 3916 Pinewood Dr., Jackson, MS, 39211). I don't know how a record from Mississippi found its way to Jersey Beat but this is the best new artist I've heard in a long time. Bradford sings and plays guitar, backed by a drummer and bassist. His uncanny pop sensibility reminds me of Emmett Rhodes and the overall feel of the record is like an American Aztec Camera, without the precious aspect. The five acoustically based songs and one rocker all have great melodies with lush overdubbed harmonies. The tunes and adult lyrics are strikingly original, with imaginative arrangements and an outstanding production. I hope this guy gets some airplay up here, as this record is as good or better than the best indie productions from NJ. --Chris Friedrich

RECORDS

FAITH
P.O. Box 7235
Trenton, NJ 08628 \$1.00

Lots of punk, hardcore, and noise, as #1 features TSOL, Gov't Issue, Agnostic Front, FCC, Will To Live, plus articles, stories, art, reviews, contests and more. #2 due in June.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
701 Orange Avenue

Cranford, NJ 07016 50¢ + 2 stamps

Hand-scribbled xerox zine with interviews, political commentary, stories, no art to speak of but lots to read. Cover sez, "Brought to you as a public service of fashionable terrorists."

SHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD
c/o David Koenig
200 E. Price St.
Linden, NJ 07036 #1B

One page newsletter. Editor Dave says "I only print 50, don't tell people to write, they're all gone!" So send a SASE and ask for the next one.

GET SMART!
PO Box 292
Morristown, NJ 07960 50¢
(plus 2 stamps for mailorder)

Reviews, opinions, art, and stories by punks from Morristown H.S.'s WSJV. Get smart, get this one!

THIS ZINE SUCKS
c/o Bob Conrad
1601 Scenic Drive
W. Trenton, NJ 08628 50¢
(plus 2 stamps for mailorder)

Issue #1 is almost all interviews (Bodies In Panic, JFA, Doggy Style, and more). Wordprocessor type, xerox, no art (yet).

BAD NEWS
196 7th Ave. #3, Bklyn, NY 11215
\$1.50

Interviews, poetry, news. Well-written.

DEAD PEOPLE
c/o Jorge
4 Henry Street
Lakewood, NJ 08701
50¢ w/ 2 stamps

Small-format zine with punk reviews, intv'ws, art, poetry and opinions.



from SKATE THREAT
Box 2456,
Pittsburgh PA 15213

DO YOU WANT TO BEAT UP POSSERS?
FEEL LIKE KICKING SOME ASS?
JOIN THE ARMY.

publications

SCRAPING FOETUS OFF THE WHEEL
Nail, Homestead Records LP

"Big" Jimmy Thurwell's new music is a hi-gear neck-bent catamite's perversion of the bogue pseudo-classicism on display in the current modes of chart-conscious luxury-edition pop ala' Trevor Horn and the various Jam/Lewis productions. The Nail album is by far the most accessible uncompromised avant-garde statement of '86, thanks to the added mellifluity the stolen orchestral "samples" bring to the scorched, sparse, speeding sound of standard Foetus. The richness and overblown pomp of the emulator intrusions create an exciting, ironic tension juxtaposed with the gutter-bound one-liners that pepper the lyrics here. Side Two is a non-stop hoot I'd dress for a Squirrel Bait show to. A shame this didn't come out on a bigger label. - Howard Wuelfing

Joey Miserable & The Worms LP (Nightcrawler Productions, 418 7th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215). After one play this disk was on its way to the curb, but a second spin showed this is a great group with a solid sense of musical history and a great batch of songs. Unfortunately the flat production (by Greg Poulos and the band) makes it difficult to realize how good these guys are. At times they resemble Southside Johnny with a sense of humor, and they combine original riffs with the feel of classic R+B and rockabilly. "Pooper-Scooper", a staple of their live act, sounds like James Brown from the early sixties. The Treniers' "Rockin' Is Our Bizness" is a long jam which should please anybody who liked Robert Plant's Honeydrippers project. The Moonglows "I Was Wrong" is an a cappella doo-wop ballad which they pull off successfully. Among their originals, "I Like It" sounds like a Stax-Volt rave-up, while "I Got Your Number" superimposes an R+B horn chart over rockabilly guitars. "No Soul" is directly descended from Billy Lee Riley's "Red Hot", and "Tell Me" is basic 3 chord R'n'R based on the main riff from the Kinks' "Education". The production lacks presence, and it would be unfair if this tremendously talented, original fun bunch gets overlooked because of an inadequate production job. --Chris Friedrich

FULL TIME MEN
"I Got Wheels" EP
Coyote/TwinTone

Who could've predicted that mating the firepower behind Amerocka's longest-running garage-punk roadshow with one of them R.E.M.en might result in stuff sounding for all the world like fuggin' Echo & The Bunnymen outtakes? Ya live 'n learn. - Howard Wuelfing

CUCUMBERS
"All Shook Up" 12" EP
Fake Doom Records
Lockbox 7295, NYC 10116

People tend to be of two minds about the Cukes: Either they love 'em or the sound of Deena Shoskes' voice sends 'em running for the nearest egress. Well, tough. I dig the Cucumbers almost as much as that little slice of pickle that comes with your pastrami sandwich at better delis. And this EP, celebrating the band's ascendancy amongst NY's trendier danceclub deejays, is even tastier.

The Cucumbers have been encoring with their minor-key dancethrob version of Presley's "All Shook Up" for a while; it translates keenly to vinyl and is handsomely backed by "Everything Goes," one of their best lyrics ("Half a million doorways/13 million key-chains") from the Who Betrays Me... LP.

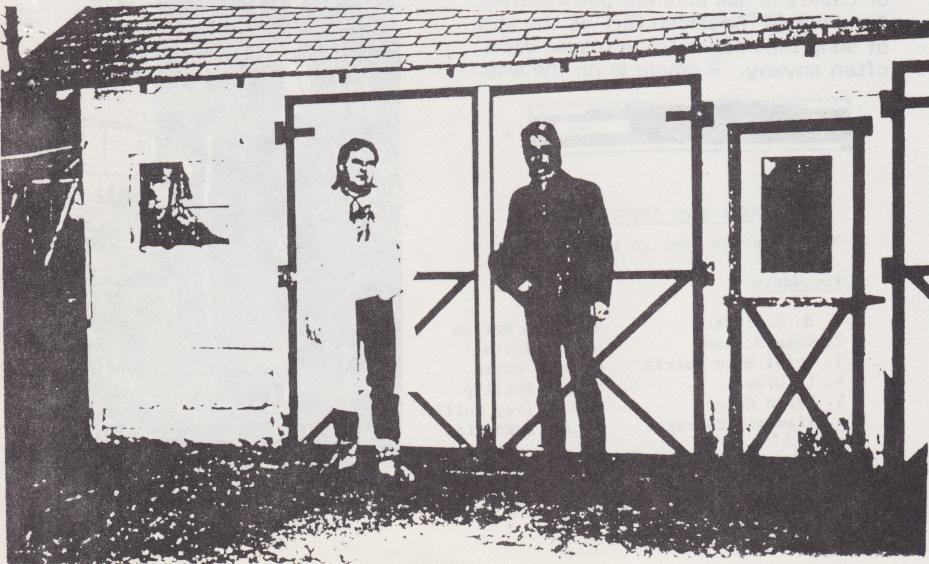
The remix extended version of "All Shook Up" is more for mixmasters and scratch-deejays to play with than anything else; I'd be perfectly happy with just the 4:00 version on Side A. That quibble aside, this is one happenin' platter. And even if it does send you running for the frontdoor, heck, you need the exercise anyway.

- Jim Testa

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SKULLS

"Dress Up & Die," 6-song EP

At their best - as on the bitchin' "Idols & Dolls" or the Ramones-Meet-Iggy head-banger "Torture Ship" - the Skulls live up to their rep as legit heirs to the NY Dolls' raunch-rock crown. But muddy production and formula metalisms keep other trax here - esp. "Jesus Put A Bullet Thru My Soul" - mired in generic Cock-Rock. Obviously the band wanted a murky sound - the demos that preceded this EP were much cleaner 'n brighter - but methinks producer/singer Charley Pip went a mite overboard.

BEDLAM

"Lost In Space," 7-song EP

God bless Bedlam. No matter how pretentious, thrashed up, burnt out, or fucked up the rest of the NJHC scene gets, these guys will be there to goof around and blow a few minds along the way. The 7-song EP roars away and clocks in at a breakneck 10:18, but that's still 10 minutes more of loony bellowing psyche-altering madness that most bands ever deliver. Scott Frank's "percussion" sounds something like six metal garbage cans rolling down a flight of concrete steps. Actually, that's pretty much what the guitars sound like too. Add Jim Dunlevy's lunatic bellow and you've got a non-stop onslaught of noise, yuks (read the lyrics, these guys are not just silly, but witty), and power that's guaranteed to clear yer sinuses faster'n Extra-Strength Sinutab.

PLEASED YOUTH

Dangerous Choo Choo, LP

With apologies to A.O.D. (hey, I luv ya, guys), this is Buy Our Records' finest release to date. Razor-edged dual guitars throw up a swirling miasma of roaring sound that could be Husker Du dueling with its clone. Angry, edgy vocals desperately try to burst through the thick layered mix as pounding thrash-speed percussion roils furiously underneath. The songs bristle with melody and lyrical wit, touching on the Buy Our gangs' frequent targets of industrial pollution, suburban malaise, and society-at-large. As impressed as I was with this band's early demos, nothing prepared me for the quality of production and breadth of sound on this LP. If last year's hottest debut in the post-hardcore pool was Squirrelbait, this year it's going to be Pleased Youth. Buy this record.

(above reviews by Jim Testa.)

BALLOON SQUAD

"Another Senseless Breakfast" cassette

The 13 trax on this cassette display a pop sensibility that's not afraid to mix it up: There are tongue-in-cheek epic adventures ("Return To The House of Lady Dracula," for a Hammer film that probably should have been made but wasn't) and slow, introspective ballads ("Prospect Street"), crunchy guitar-driven rockers ("Carla Gets Confused," "Sex Life"), and pretty pop songs ("She's Always Been A Voice On The Radio"). The enigmatic Citizen K handles guitars, harmonica, and vocals, but I suspect the rest of this trio (Marco Hugo on drums, Joe Merkless on bass, and Joe's brother Bill producing and sitting in on keyboards) share the oblique, pawky sense of humor that runs throughout this material. This is just offbeat enough to make me believe they've got even better stuff ahead of them.

MITCH COOPER

"Liquid Syllable Deacon" cassette

5616 Mallard Dr. S.

Charlotte, NC 28212

For a Southern boy from the heart of Mitch Easter country, Mitch Cooper's voice is surprisingly Anglophilic, a sweet willowy drawl much like Donovan's. It's such a nice voice that I find myself regretting he doesn't sing more on this cassette, but most of these cuts are instrumentals, and fully a third are all percussion. Cooper's music earned the much-overused "psychedelic" label by one of my favorite fellow fanzine writers, Fred Mills, and in this case it fits: Cooper's music isn't "Psychedelic" in the cliched garage-rock mode but rather truly mind-expanding, in the original "See the colors that are real" definition of psychedelic. This is perfect for jogging or just letting your mind drift along with the free-form melodies and undulating drumming. Zen and the art of the ringing snaredrum. An EP is due soon from this lad.

THE MOTIVE

This young combo hails from unhip blue-collar Hudson County and plays most of its gigs in unhip blue-collar bars and frat houses. But don't pigeonhole them just yet. Not only can this band write, but they can play. And any group with this much heart and soul is hip by definition, at least in my book. On "Trust," which the band was good enough to record for the new Jersey Beat compilation, they take on gutsy NJ barroom rockers like Southside Johnny and Eddie Money and make it work. "Slowly Going Crazy" is almost as good, as subtle in its way as "Trust" is punchy and booming. And their choice of covers is not only hip but inspired: Tom Petty's "American Girl" is the sort of song that ought to be played more often anyway. A single is on the way.

JERSEY BEAT TRIVIA QUIZ!

Match the pen name to the writer:

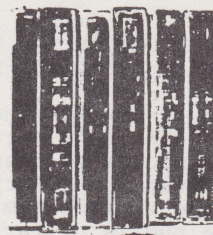
Pseudonym

1. H. Schleitel
2. Greg McLean
3. Metal Mike Ferris
4. L. Cravat
5. Byron Coley
6. Vladimir Estragon

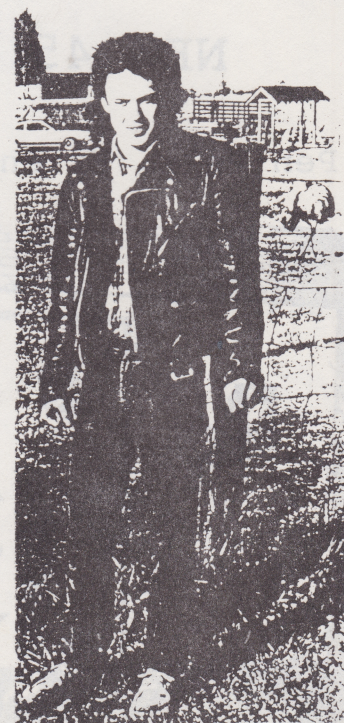
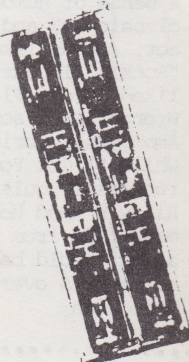
Writer

- a. Glenn Morrow
- b. Jim Testa
- c. Dave Marsh
- d. Liz Phillip
- e. Geoffrey Wolff
- f. Jim DeRogatis

Answers: 1 (d) 2 (a) 3 (b) 4 (e) 5 (c) 6 (e)



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